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What Is Sideloading (and Why Should You Care)?

Spoiler: It's a risky way of downloading apps.



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Chances are you may have heard about the dangers of clicking on [suspicious email links](#) or entering personal info on questionable sites. But did you know that there's a sneaky security risk you might unconsciously be taking?

What is sideloading?

While it might sound like a gnarly skateboard trick, "sideloading" is a pretty common tech practice that could inadvertently expose your device to security breaches. So what is sideloading? In basic terms, it simply refers to moving files between two devices—say, switching an MP3 from your laptop to your phone—as opposed to uploading or downloading files to and from the internet.

Avoid uninvited guests



But when it comes to sideloaded Android apps, the definition takes a darker turn in the world of mobile devices, sideloading means installing apps from sources outside an authorised app store. And that's where the trouble can start. Apps from Google Play, Amazon Apps or the Galaxy store have been vetted for security, but sideloaded apps from outside sources can be a little like the Wild West—unregulated and potentially hazardous. The reason? They may carry hidden malware designed to compromise your device or even your personal information.

Always-on protection

Block any unauthorised access to your phone's kernel in real time.

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You're already protected

Before you get too worried, you should know that Samsung phones like the [Galaxy A51](#), secured by Knox, already come with protections against malicious sideloaded Android apps in place. Out of the box, Samsung devices already block sideloaded apps, so in order to override this safety net, you would need to go into your settings and enable special app access. For older versions of Android (7 and below), be sure to check the "Unknown Sources" box in your settings (Settings > Lock Screen and Security) menu. You'll be able to load any application once it's turned on.

That said, instances that might require you to sideload an app are few and far between, so sticking with apps from approved app stores whenever possible is the best way to make every download a safe one.

For more on sideloading, visit [Samsung Business Insights ↗](#).

Ready for lockdown

With a security platform like Knox pre-built into devices like the Galaxy A51, your data will remain safe.



Galaxy A51

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